Prince of Soissons

(d. 25 September 505)

BRIEFING

Prince, Principius or Principe (died 25 September 505) was a Frankish bishop and saint. He was the twelfth bishop of Soissons (around 474), father or uncle of Loup of Soissons and brother of Remigius. His episcopate included major events such as the end of the Roman occupation and the confirmation of the Frankish supremacy.

LIFE

He witnessed the death of Egidius, *magister militum* of the Gauls (464), and the defeat of his son Syagrius by Clovis I in 486. Soissons fell into the victor's hands and became the headquarters for the Frankish monarchy. After the loss of his army, Syagrius fled to Toulouse, home of Alaric II, king of the Visigoths, who handed him over to Clovis for execution.

Prince's qualities brought him to Clovis' attention. This reinforced his influence over Clovis' wife Clotilde and encouraged her to try harder to get her husband to convert to Christianity. Clovis was baptised by Remigius with 3000 others, but Prince took part in the service in the presence of the college of the bishops of Gaul. On returning to Soissons Prince assisted the new converts to live according to the Christian faith.

The newly-converted Clovis' generosity enabled Prince to expand Christianity's presence in the Frankish Empire and to soften people's fates. He built new churches and increased the number of altars and parishes to make education more accessible. Prince and Remigius both corresponded with Sidonius Apollinaris (Book IX.8), whose letters give an idea of the elegant and very cultivated Gallo-Roman literary style that all three men had in common.

Prince was buried by Remigius in the chapel of saint Thecla, though his relics were later transferred to Soissons Cathedral before being burned to ashes by heretics in 1567. *Gallia Christiana* by Léon-Paul Piolin specifies that his arm was venerated at the collegiate church of Saint-Amé.